

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
 REMARKS EN ROUTE TO JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA, FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.
 OCTOBER 13, 1994

SECRETARY PERRY: Let me start off by just giving you my perspective of why I'm making this trip, what I hope to accomplish and then throw it open for Q and A.

I have two fundamentally different purposes for the trip. The first of them is to meet with troops and commanders here and get their assessment of the situation and get reports from them of what more they need to accomplish their mission successfully. As most of you who know me already know, anytime we have a significant number of troops in the field, I go there to see them and meet with them and this is all part of that general thing.

The second objective, is to meet with the government officials in both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. I have several purposes in that, the first of which is to establish a good working relationship with them because we're going to be working very closely together in the weeks and months ahead. As part of that, I will give them my assessment of the situation, get their assessment -- I will lay out how our deployment plans are unfolding and where they'll be going in the near future.

I will discuss with them the cooperation needed in order to make this deployment work. For example, in Saudi Arabia we have to get authority for bedding down each of the aircraft we bring in here and we need to get that clearly straightened out. I will want to talk with them about how their troops and our troops work together for the common defense of Kuwait, if that becomes necessary -- how they work together with the Peninsula Shield, which is the Gulf's cooperation military force.

I also want to look ahead a little bit after this crisis is resolved, how do we cooperate in a military way to posture ourselves better to prevent future crises. In particular, I will discuss ^{access} ~~base~~ ^{agreement} rights and pre-positioning of heavy armored equipment with the belief that we need to have additional heavy armor pre-positioned in the region.

I will discuss with them burden sharing. Namely how all of these costs of this operation are going to be borne by the different countries involved in it. And we'll discuss how the coalition forces which are currently working on Operation Southern Watch and the Deny Flight operation how those forces might be expanded to deal with future contingencies.

So that's the sort of things I plan to be talking about with the officials in both the Saudi and the Kuwaiti governments, and they will have their own issues and agendas to discuss with me. All of this will be in the interest of developing a deeper, more effective working relationship so as issues and problems come up in the future, we'll be able to deal directly with them.

Q. Mr. Secretary, you said before we left that there would be 25,000 troops in the area this week --

SECRETARY PERRY: Within a week.

Q. Within a week -- and that a phased withdrawal would begin after (inaudible) completes its retreat from Southern Iraq. How quickly might that begin and how large do you see the current buildup reaching before you start reversing it? I think you committed up to 40,000 so far

SECRETARY PERRY: Let me answer your question in terms of ground combat troops, just so I don't complicate the issue of trying to calculate sailors on ships and airmen and so on.

We're going to approximately 30,000 ground combat troops within a week in Kuwait regardless of what the Iraqis do. That level, give or take a thousand or two, that's the level from which we will be drawing down as the crisis gets resolved. I'd like that drawdown to occur in a matter of weeks, not in a matter of months -- of the ground combat forces. Forces that will stay in the area to help prevent future crises from arising will be primarily air forces. My present estimate is we will need to augment somewhat the air forces which have been here in the past that were performing the Southern Watch operation.

Q. How do you define ~~time~~? ACCESS AGREEMENTS?

SECRETARY PERRY: This is a Saudi term for getting agreement to use -- for our aircraft to come in and operate out of their bases.

Q. Could you give us some idea of the force that you would need -- there've been a lot of numbers thrown around about how many planes were in there earlier -- could you give us some round figure of how many planes you think you'd need in the area?

SECRETARY PERRY: We're building up to a force of several hundred aircraft in the region, probably in the range of 400 or 500 in the whole region. At the same time we start drawing down our ground combat forces, we will start drawing that down as well. The point that I made earlier is we will not, however, draw that down to the level before the crisis. We will have some additional airplanes here than we had for the Southern Watch operation -- the exact number and the exact type yet to be determined, but I would anticipate needing more aircraft here in the future than we've had in the past.

Q. But all of the ground troops would be gone?

SECRETARY PERRY: Essentially, all of the ground troops would be gone.

Q. Let me ask you -- something that you said last night -- but to clarify, as I understand it, there was a resolution being prepared in the United Nations that would call on the Iraqis to withdraw essentially to their status quo positions. But, I believe you were making the point that you thought something more than that would be required by way of a security arrangement for Southern Iraq -- I don't know what you would call it -- a Republican Guard Free Zone or a tank buffer or something. What is your thinking on that and could you also say explain how you see Iraq as sort of a long-term threat because clearly these are measures designed to contain a long-term menace to the region not just an episodic threat.

SECRETARY PERRY: The first step is getting a U.N. resolution along the lines of the ones that are being debated which would condemn the actions of Iraq, which would demand that they withdraw their forces, and further demand that they not threaten that region in the future the way they did in the past. Such a resolution will likely have a phrase in it calling on member nations to implement, enforce that agreement. Then once that resolution is established, a coalition of member nations would then get together to decide what they can do for that enforcement. So that meeting, those discussions are yet ahead of us. We don't expect the U.N. resolution to spell out enforcement techniques.

Q. Mr. Secretary...

Q. Let him answer the second part -- if Iraq is a long term -- do you see it as a long-term threat to be contained?

SECRETARY PERRY: I see Iraq as a long-term threat to be contained. I think this resolution will provide the basis for an international coalition that would set up the conditions and the necessary military force to provide that containment.

Q. Do you foresee sort of a Korea-like situation -- a bulk force, a more substantial U.S. presence being required to be permanently or semi-permanently in the region?

SECRETARY PERRY: I would tend to compare it more with the Southern Watch which has already been underway for several years now. In my mind Southern Watch is the model that I would use for building, but I think it has to be augmented somewhat.

Q. You might recall, at this point, based on your latest information, what is the likelihood of events in Iraqi action and secondly, in your discussions, are you going to be discussing the issue of if it comes to a fight, will one of the objectives of the fight for the coalition be the removal of Saddam?

SECRETARY PERRY: You're postulating that Iraq doesn't withdraw and some sort of a war get started. I think our force buildup in the last week and our clear statement of resolve has been effective, that is it has provided the deterrence that we wanted it to provide. So I think deterrence is working and that Iraq is pulling back and will not enter Kuwait. I think that is going to be successful. So the second part of the question is hypothetical -- not only hypothetical but on a situation that I think is very unlikely to exist.

Q. Mr. Secretary, what do you see as an allowable Iraqi military presence in the South of the country?

SECRETARY PERRY: I don't want to be too precise on answering that. Quite clearly, if the coalition is going to set up an enforcement mechanism, it will have to be precise on that point. That is a debate and discussion which will take place among the coalition members. But I think in subjective terms, not in precise terms, in subjective terms it has to be limited to a force that cannot threaten an invasion of Kuwait. Now, in my judgment -- and other people may have different judgments on this -- the force they had in the region prior to 20 September was not a force capable of threatening Kuwait. Even though in numbers it outnumbered the Kuwaiti army, it was a force that would have made a very sorry showing had it tried to -- on its own tried to launch a preemptive attack. So the criteria will be a force that cannot seriously threaten an invasion and subjective judgments will have to be made by the different coalition members as to what that is.

Q. Since you're already having reservations about some of this, are you confident you can keep the coalition together for the long term? You clearly expect Iraq to be a long-term threat. Is this a long-term coalition you've got now?

SECRETARY PERRY: I think this is a long-term problem and therefore, the coalition that is formed to deal with it needs to be in for the long term. Any nation that is not prepared to deal with this as a long-term problem ought not to be a member of the coalition.

Q. Can I squeeze in one last question. You mention the magic word "burden sharing," how much is this whole thing going to cost and how much do we want the Saudis and the Gulf States to pay for?

SECRETARY PERRY: You're a little ahead of me right now on both parts of the question. I'll make a stab at the first one though. This stab is on the assumption that the buildup does not go beyond what we have already ordered and deployed -- another words, the pull back is really effective and that we start to withdraw our forces in a few weeks and get most of the ground combat forces out of there after awhile. In that case, we're looking at a cost that are in excess of \$500 million, but less than a billion dollars. The range in between those two numbers depends on a lot of details which aren't worked out yet. We would expect -- that's the amount that we're talking about for burden sharing -- for assistance by the various members of this coalition who would be involved in the operation.

Q. Why wouldn't they pay for the whole thing?

SECRETARY PERRY: We'll be discussing that whole set of issues with them.

Q. In our conversation in the terminal, you also said, if I could just get you to amplify this, the idea that you want to go ahead with the deployment, (A) because you don't trust Saddam, and (B) because it's a good exercise anyway.

SECRETARY PERRY: We're going ahead with the deployment first of all because we don't have the withdrawal of the Iraqi forces completed and it won't be completed in some time. And I do not want to create a situation where Iraq may believe that we've pulled our deterrent forces out of there and, therefore, they may lose the deterrent effect. To put it in simple terms, I don't trust the statement that we've gotten from them and I think we have to be there to enforce it.

Secondly, there is some value -- some training value -- to this exercise. Bringing the Army troops over, for example, and then joining them with their pre-positioned equipment is an exercise that we used to do in Europe every year on something called Operation Reforger. We find that that kind of training is very beneficial. So at some scale and at some length of time it's valuable. We would not want to do it at a larger scale than we're now planning to do it. We certainly would not want to keep the troops over there for many weeks because then you start to lose the training value.

Q. One more thing to make clear -- you have indicated that the total number of troops there would reach as of now about 30,000, but probably not go beyond that if the withdrawal is quickly completed. Is that what you're saying?

SECRETARY PERRY: Yes.

Thanks.

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